



## Representative **Toby Nixon • 45th District**

### **2002 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE & SURVEY**

**Committees:** Children & Family Services, Finance, Technology, Telecommunications & Energy

Dear Friends,

As your new state representative, it's important to me that the 2002 legislative session in Olympia produces real results. Citizens and families in our district are feeling the effects of the recession and I believe lawmakers have a responsibility to do what they can to make sure families always come first. And from small family businesses to companies as large as Microsoft, state government regulations are unfairly holding our economy at bay. Our regulatory climate is costing us jobs, and that must end.

This session, our families, our businesses and our economy will receive my full attention. We have a state budget to bring back into balance, a growing transportation crisis to address, and an economy that needs more economic incentives and less taxes and red tape.

In this brief newsletter, you'll find important information on these and other issues. Also, I've included a short survey that I hope you'll complete and return to me. The more I hear from you, the better I can represent you in Olympia!

It's an honor and privilege to serve as your state representative. Please do not hesitate to contact me with your questions, concerns and advice. My team is ready to assist you with issues concerning state government. Please let me know how I can serve you best.

In your service,

Toby Nixon

Your State Representative

## **BALANCING THE BUDGET**

With the recession taking its toll on state revenues, we currently face a \$1.2 billion shortfall in the state's operating budget. As we address this budget challenge, lawmakers must remember that Washington families are also facing challenges.

The easy thing for lawmakers to do to balance the budget would be to simply raise taxes. But I don't think we should ask families to pay more when many are worried about their own income and dealing with the loss of jobs.

### **GOVERNOR'S BUDGET PROTECTS STATE BUREAUCRACY INSTEAD OF VULNERABLE CITIZENS**

The first proposal for correcting the budget shortfall was offered by the governor last month. It calls for cuts to disabled citizens, nursing homes, and pharmacists who provide prescription drugs to low-income citizens on Medicaid. It would also raise taxes by nearly \$100 million, despite the governor's assurance that he wouldn't do so.

But the most discouraging thing about the governor's proposal is what it doesn't do: It fails to make a serious attempt to reduce the number of state employees. It calls for a net reduction of just 440 employees (less than one half of 1 percent of the 99,300 state employees).

## **MY BUDGET PRIORITIES**

To bring our budget into balance, bolster the economy and help create new family-wage jobs in Washington, we should be looking for ways to cut bureaucracy with the least amount of impact on front-line services for those in need. I simply don't believe we should be protecting the state's bureaucracy at the expense of vulnerable citizens and working families.

## Representative **TOBY NIXON • 45th District**

### **KEEPING WASHINGTON ON THE MOVE!**

Ask just about anyone who lives in one of our Eastside communities what takes more valuable time away from their family or job, and chances are they'll answer "Traffic."

Getting from home to work, school or even the grocery store can be quite an ordeal. The time we spend sitting in bumper-to-bumper traffic on our state roads and highways is staggering. You have probably heard on more than one occasion that Washington is home to some of the worst traffic in the nation. And ours is right in the thick of it all. We all know the problem exists, so let's start thinking seriously about how we're going to fix it.

My goal is to increase the capacity on our roads and highways so that our growing population can get where it needs to go in a fraction of the time. Imagine having an extra hour with your kids, parents or friends. Imagine sleeping in a little later and still getting to work on time. Imagine how your life would change if you cut in half the amount of time you spend stuck in traffic.

I'm working hard to insure that key road capacity and safety improvements in the district and throughout the Eastside are funded in the transportation package, including SR-520, SR-202, SR-203, and I-405.

And, reducing traffic congestion by increasing our road capacity will also help protect our environment. When vehicles travel at a steady, constant rate – instead of idling in traffic – we use less gas, spend less time driving, and our cars operate more efficiently.



*Supreme Court Justice Richard B. Sanders congratulates Toby Nixon after swearing him into office as 45th District Representative.*

### **THE TRANSPORTATION DEBATE**

The Legislature will go back to the drawing board this session to try to solve the state's transportation challenges. Negotiations on a funding plan broke down over the summer, leaving some critical projects throughout the state without funding.

The governor has dusted off the same plan rejected by lawmakers last year, which includes the following tax increases:

- 9-cent per gallon gas tax increase
- 12-cent increase on diesel
- Increased sales tax on car purchases
- Increased weight fees on trucks and RVs
- \$50 license registration fee

Aside from the fact that lawmakers didn't like this plan last time it came before us, the governor has alienated many communities by threatening to pull funding for projects if their local lawmakers don't support his plan. This tactic disappointed lawmakers from both parties.

### **"REAL WORLD" SOLUTIONS TO TOUGH CHALLENGES**

As a fresh voice in the Legislature, my goal is to bring a "real world" perspective to these problems that seem to have many career politicians stumped. Getting Washington moving again should not be about politics, the next elections, or the egos of the lawmakers involved. We can't lose sight of the citizens, families and businesses who need relief – and they need it today.

We also can't let every problem become just another excuse to raise taxes. I believe we need to make a new investment in transportation, but I also believe the voters should have the final say on any major new tax increases. If lawmakers in Olympia can earn the public's trust by designing a plan that will really make a difference, I believe voters will support such a plan. The plan must include a specific list of projects that will be completed. That means greater accountability and a scorecard by which we can measure how good a job the state is doing when it comes to delivering on its promises. We need to first earn the public's trust, and that's the message I'll be bringing to the transportation debate this year.

# GOOD GOVERNMENT SURVEY

Please take a moment to complete and return this brief questionnaire. Your answers are very important for I'll be very active in helping write whatever plan eventually emerges from the Legislature. And as your state representative, the more I hear from you, the louder your voice will be heard in Olympia.

## TRANSPORTATION

- Would you support a plan that raises gas taxes as long as completing the I-405 expansion through Kirkland and Canyon Park is included?  
☐ Yes    ☐ No
- Would you prefer that the gas tax proposal to pay for statewide road and highway improvements be passed in the Legislature, or would you prefer the plan be put on the ballot for voters to decide?  
☐ passed by Legislature  
☐ voter referendum  
☐ rejected by Legislature
- One proposal being considered includes an 8-cent increase in gas taxes, in which the Legislature would vote on a 4-cent increase and the voters would consider the remaining 4-cent increase on the next ballot. Would you support this proposal?  
☐ Yes    ☐ No

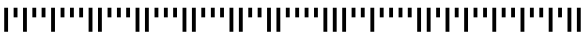
## BUDGET

- With a \$1.2 billion hole in the state budget, what would you prefer we did to balance the budget? (check one)  
☐ Increase taxes to pay for existing programs in the budget  
☐ Cutting government services and size  
☐ A combination of new taxes and government cuts  
☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- If cuts were to be made in state government, where would you prefer the cost savings were found? (check all that apply)  
☐ Reduce the size of the state workforce  
☐ Identify and eliminate unnecessary programs  
☐ Cut each agency within state government by 10%  
☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## ADVICE

Please use the space below to include any questions, comments, concerns or advice you'd like to share with me. Remember, the more I hear from you, the better I can represent you in Olympia! \_\_\_\_\_  
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Olympia, WA 98504-0600  
P.O. Box 40600  
**Toby Nixon**  
State Representative



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## IT'S IMPORTANT WE STAY IN CONTACT!

As your state representative, I believe the more I hear from you, the better I can represent and serve you in the Legislature. Because this is an election year, I am allowed to send you two newsletters this year – the one you're reading now, and a second near the end of the legislative session.

If you have questions, comments, concerns or advice, I want to hear from you. Please call, e-mail or send me a letter and I'll see you get the information and assistance you need.

The best way to reach me is either via email at [nixon\\_to@leg.wa.gov](mailto:nixon_to@leg.wa.gov), or by calling me toll-free at 1-800-562-6000.

Once again, it's a pleasure to serve as your state representative. I'm honored by your trust and look forward to working for you!

If you would like for me to respond to your comments, please provide your address or e-mail address here.

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**2002  
Session  
Report**

**Toby Nixon**  
State Representative

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